How to Develop New Courses and Other Curriculum Changes

Faculty drive the curriculum at the University of Tennessee. Based on changes in knowledge and needs, faculty are responsible for developing changes to courses taught, degree programs, and other academic requirements and procedures.

Consult with colleagues and especially your departmental undergraduate or graduate council representative on ideas for changes to courses and other information in the course catalogs for adding, dropping, or revising any information. Departments often have a curriculum committee to help guide curriculum changes.

Review the examples and pertinent information for your idea in the curriculum proposal submission guidelines. The guidelines for undergraduate courses are available at the [Undergraduate Council](https://ugcouncil.utk.edu) website; the [Graduate Council](https://gradschool.utk.edu/faculty-staff/graduate-council/) website hosts guidelines for graduate curriculum proposals.

Submit your proposed change(s) to your department for review. Proposals are accepted at any time of the year.

If your department approves the proposed changes, the department submits them to the College graduate and/or undergraduate council for review. Approved changes are then submitted to the University curriculum committee, followed by the graduate and/or undergraduate council, and ultimately the Faculty Senate. Certain changes, e.g., a new major, must go through additional approvals as described in the undergraduate and graduate council curriculum submission guides.

The University sets annual deadlines for proposals to appear in a given academic year’s catalog. An academic year begins in August and concludes the following July/August. Usually courses have to be submitted by the College to the University no later than mid-December. Special designations of courses, such as those for General Education (AKA VolCore) need to be submitted to the appropriate committee earlier in the fall semester.

**Example timeline for a new course or revisions to an existing course:**

**February-March**: Idea is discussed with colleagues

**April**: Department curriculum committee and department head approve. The proposal is forwarded to the College’s Undergraduate Academic Council

**May**: The College’s Undergraduate Academic Council reviews the proposal. If questions exist, it may be sent back to the proposing department for clarification. If approved, the proposal goes the University undergraduate or graduate curriculum committee.

**August**: The appropriate University curriculum committee reviews the proposal. If questions exist, it may be sent back to the proposing college for clarification. If approved, the proposal goes the University Undergraduate or Graduate Council.

**September**: The appropriate University Council reviews the proposal. If questions exist, it may be sent back to the proposing college for clarification. If approved, the proposal goes the University Faculty Senate

**October**: The Faculty Senate reviews curriculum proposals submitted for that cycle. If questions exist, it may be sent back to the proposing college for clarification. If approved, the proposed course change is queued for the following academic year catalog to go into effect the following August. (Note: The Fall catalog is published in mid- to late spring so students can register for Fall semester courses).

New degree programs and other major changes will have different timelines and may require approval from other groups such as the Provost’s office, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Courses 100-400 level are always undergraduate courses. 100 and 200 level are considered Lower Division – such courses typically cover introductory content and are intended to be completed during a student’s first two years of college. They are generally focused on the first couple levels of [Bloom's Taxonomy](https://liveutk-my.sharepoint.com/personal/jstier1_utk_edu/Documents/Documents/HCA/Website/Website%20report%20Elena%20Sept2014.docx), e.g., remembering and understanding. The 300 and 400 level courses are Upper Division, covering content more in-depth and taken during the latter half of a student’s undergraduate program. They will be mostly focused on the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy, such as applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. 400-level courses may be approved for graduate credit. If so, they will appear in both the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. Any changes to 400-level courses approved for graduate credit must be first proposed at, and approved by, the undergraduate council.

Courses listed as 500 or 600 are graduate student courses. Undergraduate students are eligible to enroll in 500-level courses unless specifically prohibited.

VolCore is the University’s moniker for General Education courses. VolCore integrates parts of General Education into a student’s major primarily through Applied Oral Communications (AOC) and Engaged Inquiries (EI) courses. Specific general education courses for other requirements (e.g., Social Sciences) may be required for a given major. More information on VolCore is available through the undergraduate council website.

April 2023